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Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation: progress report on the implementation of the triennial comprehensive policy review

Draft resolution submitted by the Vice-President of the Council, Mr. Dumisani Shadrack Kumalo (South Africa), on the basis of informal consultations

Progress on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 56/201 on the triennial policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 56/201 of 21 December 2001 on the triennial policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the progress in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 56/201, including the actions, targets, benchmarks and time frames indicated therein,[1] on the United Nations system support for capacity-building,[2] on the simplification and harmonization of rules and procedures for operational activities for development,[3] and on assessing the effectiveness of the operational activities for development of the United Nations system,[4] as well as the consolidated list of issues related to the coordination of operational activities for development, 2002;[5]

2. *Stresses* the need for all organizations of the United Nations development system, in accordance with their respective mandates, to focus their efforts at the field level in accordance with the priorities identified by recipient countries and the

[1] E/2002/47 and Add.1 and 2.
[2] E/2002/58.
[3] E/2002/59.
[4] E/2002/60.
[5] E/2002/CRP.1.

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goals, targets and commitments set in the United Nations Millennium Declaration[6] and by the major United Nations conferences;

3. *Reiterates* that the fundamental characteristics of the operational activities of the United Nations system should be, inter alia, their universal, voluntary and grant nature, their neutrality and their multilateralism, as well as their ability to respond to development needs in a flexible manner, and that the operational activities of the United Nations system are carried out for the benefit of recipient countries, at the request of those countries and in accordance with their own policies and priorities for development;

Funding of operational activities for development of the United Nations system

4. *Recalls* the endorsement by the General Assembly in its resolution 210 B of 9 July 2002 of the Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development;[7]

5. *Takes note* of the concern with respect to current estimates of shortfalls in the resources required to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration;

6. *Encourages* all countries to further their support for the operational activities of the United Nations through increased funding, particularly to the regular resources of the United Nations funds and programmes;

7. *Notes* the efforts of the executive boards and secretariats of the United Nations Development Programme and United Nations Population Fund and of the United Nations Children's Fund to establish multi-year funding frameworks that integrate programme objectives, resources, budgets and outcomes, with the objective of increasing core resources and enhancing their predictability, and in this regard invites them to continue to develop and refine the frameworks as a strategic resource management tool;

8. *Notes with regret* that, although significant progress has been achieved with regard to the governance and functioning of the United Nations development system, there has not been, as part of that overall process of change, a significant increase in the regular resources for operational activities for development;

9. *Stresses* that the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals including those contained in the Millennium Declaration requires a new partnership between donor and recipient countries, based on the recognition of national leadership and ownership of development plans, as well as sound policies and good governance at national and international levels;

10. *Also stresses* the need to strive to achieve the targets for resource mobilization identified in the relevant multi-year funding frameworks of United Nations funds and programmes;

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[6] See General Assembly resolution 55/2.

[7] *Report of the International Conference on Financing for Development, Monterrey, Mexico, 18-22 March 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.02.II.A.7), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

Capacity-building

11. *Recognizes* that capacity-building is a major component of the overall efforts to achieve the internationally agreed development goals and objectives, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration and, in this regard, urges all Member States to devote more attention and resources to developing national capacities;

12. *Urges* Member States to pay greater attention, inter alia, to the capacity-building requirements inherent in reducing the global digital divide;

13. *Takes note with appreciation* of the report of the Secretary-General[2] prepared in response to paragraph 28 of resolution 56/201 on United Nations system support for capacity-building and the review included therein of the efforts undertaken by United Nations system organizations in this area;

14. *Requests* all organizations of the United Nations development system at country level, in full consultations with recipient Governments and other relevant stakeholders, to focus on capacity-building as one of their primary objectives, and to identify and focus on those areas where national capacities do not exist or are inadequate and, in this regard, also requests all organizations of the United Nations development system to explicitly formulate the expected outcomes of their capacity-building activities, and to integrate them into the implementation and monitoring of their projects and programmes;

15. *Requests* all organizations of the United Nations development system, under the aegis of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, to closely cooperate in further defining and/or updating the indicators and benchmarks used to design, manage and monitor capacity-building activities in support of the efforts made by recipient countries to achieve the internationally agreed development goals and objectives, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration;

16. *Encourages* the organizations of the United Nations development system, in full collaboration with recipient Governments and other relevant stakeholders, to intensify their efforts to reflect on and analyse their knowledge of and experience with capacity-building, with a view to offering improved support to the development of national capacities and, in this context, to intensify the exchange of experience and the sharing of best practices;

17. *Requests* all organizations of the United Nations development system to further develop and implement monitoring and evaluation methodologies and mechanisms related to capacity-building outcomes;

Common country assessment and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework

18. *Requests* United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies to ensure the integration of their operational activities for development with national development efforts, with active and full government participation and leadership at all stages of the common country assessment and United Nations Development Assistance Framework processes, as well as broader involvement of all relevant stakeholders;

19. *Encourages* the United Nations system organizations to continue their efforts to promote collaboration among themselves, under the leadership of the recipient Government, on the basis of frameworks for coordination, assessment and programming such as, inter alia, the common country assessment and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, taking into account the lessons learned from the current applications;

20. *Encourages* greater cooperation among the World Bank, the regional banks and all funds and programmes, taking into account their respective competencies, mandates and comparative advantages, with a view to achieving increased complementarity and better division of labour, as well as enhanced coherence in their sectoral activities, building on the existing arrangements and fully in accordance with the priorities of the recipient Government and, in this regard, emphasizes the importance of ensuring, under the leadership of national Governments, greater consistency between the strategic frameworks developed by the United Nations funds, programmes and agencies and the Bretton Woods institutions, and the national poverty reduction strategies, including the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, where they exist;

Evaluation of operational activities for development

21. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on assessing the effectiveness of the operational activities for development of the United Nations system;[4]

22. *Reaffirms* that the effectiveness of operational activities should be assessed by their impact on poverty eradication, economic growth and sustainable development of recipient countries as set out in the commitments, goals and targets of the United Nations Millennium Declaration and of the major United Nations conferences;

23. *Emphasizes* that the United Nations system should strive towards continuous improvement of instruments of monitoring and evaluation with a view to ensuring that evaluation results and lessons learned are taken into account in decision-making on policy and programming, bearing in mind that national ownership of operational activities and the integration with national efforts are necessary conditions for their effectiveness and sustainability;

24. *Underlines* that future assessments of the effectiveness of the operational activities for development of the United Nations system should make full use of the data and expertise available within the United Nations system and from national authorities in full collaboration with national stakeholders and United Nations entities;

Simplification and harmonization of rules and procedures on operational activities

25. *Notes with appreciation* the submission of a programme of work for the full simplification and harmonization of rules and procedures in key areas by the United Nations funds and programmes as contained in the annex to the consolidated list of issues related to the coordination of operational activities for development, 2002,[5] and requests its implementation in a timely manner;

26. *Notes* the role of the Executive Committee of the United Nations Development Group in facilitating the definition of the agenda on simplification and harmonization and its implementation, while acknowledging that the ultimate responsibility for implementing this agenda rests with the funds and programmes; and also notes, in this respect, that the United Nations funds and programmes are requested to report annually on the progress made in this area to the Economic and Social Council and the respective executive boards;

27. *Also notes* the progress made in increasing the number of United Nations Houses and the approach adopted to achieve and enhance common premises and services at the country level, particularly by members of the Executive Committee of the United Nations Development Group, in cooperation with other organizations of the system;

28. *Encourages* the United Nations funds and programmes to continue their efforts to promote collaboration among themselves through joint initiatives, including joint programming, where appropriate;

29. *Invites* the executive boards of the United Nations funds and programmes as well as the governing bodies of the specialized agencies to consider the issue of common services and take concrete steps to facilitate its implementation at the country level, inter alia, by providing financial support to the process of setting up such services;

30. *Encourages* the executive boards of the United Nations funds and programmes to consider further progress in the areas of simplification and harmonization of the rules and procedures on operational activities at an upcoming joint session of the boards before the next triennial comprehensive policy review.